

He could have stayed home with his wife and family. He could have. He chose to go out and participate in an activity where somebody was going to get killed — him, the police or the people he was trying to rob. He had a choice to stay home. Ultimately, it was a bad choice for him.

**I have two kids.** I have a daughter who is 21 and lives in California with her mother — who is also a police officer. Then, I have a son who, at the time of the shooting, was 16. Anytime I'm late, I always try to call my wife and say, 'Hey, I'm OK, don't worry, here's what happened.' After about an hour, I called her and said I was going to be late. She asked if everything was OK and I said, 'No, I've had to shoot somebody.' Automatically she was in denial. I think she was more upset than I was.

**When I came home from Iraq, I had trouble sleeping** because of some of the pent up aggression that you have from being forced into taking other people's lives. Taking a life — you're not programmed to kill people. I think everybody is programmed to help people. I guess she thought maybe I was going to have some lingering issues because she asked, 'Are you OK? How are you feeling?' I told her, 'I'm feeling fine. He put me in a no-win situation.' So I had to tell her what was going on, we talked for several minutes, I said, 'I'll call you back when I know something more.'

**I didn't tell my son until the next day.** We sat on the front porch, drank some coffee, and I told him what happened. I said, 'You're going to see my name in the paper here in the next little bit. It's going to be talked about a lot, maybe by your friends at school.' I told him, 'Here's what you need to expect, and here's what you need to tell them. You just tell them your dad was forced into a situation where he had no choice other than to kill somebody. That's just the way it is. If people don't like that answer, you tell them to come talk to me. But don't let them say anything negative to you.' They never did. There was nothing but positive feedback from the population.

You know teenagers, they see so much on TV these days, I guess they're conditioned to carnage and death. He just said,

'Well dad, I'd rather have you here than not have you here. You did what you had to do.' I don't think they realize the severity of the situation until they grow up and mature a little bit.

**[Receiving the award] was very humbling.** I mean, of all the police officers across 50 states, I was chosen to represent my department and my state. Well, how do you respond to that? Even being nominated for something like that is just a blessing. But to actually receive the award, I almost don't even believe it myself. When I received the award, I said I felt very undeserving. With so many people trying to get out here and make a difference, I'm very undeserving, I think.

**It's a long wall, and up at the top it says National Police Officer of the Year.** It starts with the year it started and goes across in rows. We went to the Hall of Fame the day before the ceremony, and it's actually a museum. We're walking around and it has badges from Wyatt Earp and even has his pistol in there. We're walking around, me and my son and Chief Brock, and we were almost to the end and I said, 'Wow, these are all the guys who have won it before. Chief says, 'Yeah, you ought to go over and read that last one, it's pretty interesting.' I went over there and they already had mine up. I was like, 'Oh my gosh, that's — wow.' I had no idea, none whatsoever.

**I don't have the words to describe how it makes you feel** just so many emotions rolled into one. I'm lucky that I survived the incident in the first place. I feel humbled that people actually recognize me and other law enforcement officers and agencies. But I'm humbled knowing that somebody out there knows what you do for a living and appreciates you. So many other people out there are doing the same job as you. Why should I be singled out? I think all police officers' names should be up there, if you want to know the truth about it. Every one of us. But, then again, I might have a biased opinion.

**Police officers get lulled sometimes into a false sense of security.** You get the same routine calls every day. And, I think for not all but some police officers, you don't expect to be put in a situation like that.

You're always trained to, but you never think it's going to happen to you. I can tell you one thing. Every time now those emergency tones go off and they say there's somebody out there with a gun — whether it's somebody fighting or a domestic or whatever — I expect to see a gun when I get there. I expect somebody to be there with bad intentions in their heart. So I think it just puts you a little bit more alert. I guess you can mentally prepare yourself a little more as you're driving to the scene to actually prepare yourself for battle. I mean, not just get out there trying to break up two people who are in an argument, but when you're going to a call, mentally prepare yourself for battle. Because it could happen in a millisecond. Somebody could pull out a weapon and try to take your life. I guess that's what's great about police work. Every call is different and you handle every call differently. But you prepare yourself for battle when you go on every call.

*(Interviewer: Do you think you'll ever forget how the end of that barrel looked?)*

**Nope. Never. I can see it right now as plain as I can see your face.** It was just a big, cheap, ugly weapon. And when he raised it up and I saw the front of it, after he had fallen I was thinking, 'That was a Browning Highpoint 9 mm he was just pointing at my head.' I've dealt with that weapon before from bad guys. I will never forget how that weapon looked as he was holding it in my face. When you can hear him breathing through the mask, you're close. If he had shot, we were probably so close he wouldn't have missed. I don't think he would have missed. I would have been hit somewhere. And, like I said, I was looking straight down the barrel. I'm afraid if he got a shot off I wouldn't be here. But, it's always a good day when the good guys win. So that was a good day, generally speaking.

**Ever since then,** when it gets dark and I know the employees in the restaurant are shutting down, I always drive through the parking lot. Just in case anybody else has any bad intentions, to let them know, hey, this is hallowed ground. Stay the hell away from here. 🐾

Kelly Foreman can be reached at [kelly.foreman@ky.gov](mailto:kelly.foreman@ky.gov) or (859) 622-8552.